

## Peace Prayer

## Old Orchard Church

July 21, 2013 – 10:15 to 11:50 a.m.



We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

**Song:** Text: Based on a prayer of St. Francis of Assisi. Text and music © 1976, John B. Foley, S.J.. Published by OCP. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Licensing-online #612256. **Cover art:** former OOC member David Buckley (1991)

In Christ God was  
reconciling the world to himself,  
not counting their trespasses  
against them, and entrusting to us  
the message of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:19

## Celebrating Jesus Christ, The Great Reconciler

The wrath of God hangs over the rebel world,  
and the world is at odds with itself:



rich against poor, young against old,  
Arab against Jew, Syrian against Syrian,  
man against woman,  
terrorist against America,  
white against black,  
progressive against conservative.

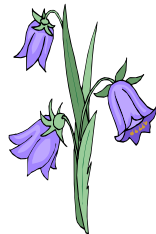
“In the world you have trouble.”

But thanks be to God!

The Great Reconciler has come, even Jesus the Christ.  
At Calvary's cross he purchased our peace with God,  
And from it flows the reconciliation of the world.

Vindicated by his resurrection,  
He now breaks down the dividing wall of hostility,  
and recreates us one New Humanity,  
one Church throughout the earth.

Worship the Lord in confidence and delight—  
but dare to come to him only through his Reconciler.



### Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson: Leviticus 1:1-9

Epistle Lesson: Colossians 1:9-23

### Sermon

“Faithful to the Next Generation—Till Death is Shamed in Hell”

Psalms 78

*Ron Lutjens, senior pastor, preaching*

## The Torn Soul of the World

We praise Christ today as the Great Reconciler. Human life, ever since our fall from innocence in Eden, has been scarred by huge pocks of alienation and anger. Eve and Adam thumb their nose at God, and immediately they are alienated from him: they hide when he comes looking for them because they fear his just displeasure. And they are alienated from each other: Adam pushes away his wife in blame, and they feel shame in their nakedness before each other. Just a myth, some would claim. But it's intriguing that while Genesis was written a couple of thousand years ago, the husband/wife dynamic it describes is the same one we know. In a 1940's essay on marriage, *The Necessary Enemy*, Katherine Anne Porter, the American novelist, wrote:

*This very contemporary young woman finds herself facing the oldest and ugliest dilemma of marriage. She is dismayed, horrified, full of guilt and foreboding because she is finding out little by little that she is capable of hating her husband whom she loves faithfully.*

A neighbor will not talk to a neighbor for months on end because of some slight suffered; a mother lashes out in anger at a rambunctious toddler in a store, and you can practically touch the alienation between them. In 2011, when Muammar Gaddafi, was discovered hiding in a culvert in his hometown in Libya, someone posted a video of the dictator stripped to the waist and in a pool of blood, apparently suffering from a bullet wound to the head. The footage included his happy enemies, celebrating and firing automatic weapons into the air. In an alienated world, if you take the sword you are likely to die by it.

How desperately we *need* reconciliation—because it mends what alienation rips up: the fragile fabric of love and respect in the relationships we were created for. And how wonderfully we *have* reconciliation, because Christ came, and his coming has made a difference in the alienation that tears our world apart. He reconciled us to God, but he also made possible a peace between people who rage against each other.

A couple of years ago at the annual General Assembly meeting of our church, the Presbyterian Church in America, there was a most encouraging presentation of two men: one was an Israeli and the other a Palestinian. They were both believers in Messiah Jesus, and were friends, working side by side in an organization in Israel to bring Arabs and Israelis together in the name of our Great Reconciler. That was practically the best talk I heard all week, as it reminded me in a fresh way of what happens when the love of God gets loosed in human, self-seeking hearts.

Christ is at work in the world! Take heart, because it's Resurrection Morning, the day that rolls around every week when we get to celebrate the vindication of our Lord Christ for the work he did on a Roman cross to melt the hostility between us and God and to reknit the tender tissue of trust that holds people together.

—Ron Lutjens